

# State Representative **Phil Pflum**



## *Session Report*



☒ The New State Budget

☒ Fighting Crime

☒ Economic Development Initiatives

☒ New Meth Legislation



# INDIANA'S NEW BUDGET

## School Funding Cuts and Increased Property Taxes



**T**he new state budget that passed by a narrow margin increases property taxes and, at the same time, cuts funding for local schools. After years of bipartisan efforts to reform education and reduce property taxes, the majority party has approved a budget that will cut state funding for many schools and raise property taxes by nearly \$850 million.

I voted "NO" on the final version of the state budget because of the negative impact it will have on education, children and those who pay property taxes. I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget.

There are no minimum guarantees in state funding for schools, which means more than 140 school corporations will receive less money. Those corporations will be forced into eliminating teachers, cutting programs and increasing class sizes. Any additional funding for schools will come primarily from raising local property taxes.

There will be reduced state support through the Property Tax Replacement Credit (PTRC), another move that will increase local property taxes. This eliminates the promise of just three years ago to provide more state support to combat rising property taxes in light of the historic and controversial statewide reassessment.

**"I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget."**

In addition, funding for the program that provides health care for the elderly, disabled and children will increase by 5 percent, although bipartisan experts have predicted a 10-percent growth. State assistance for road repairs and improvements will decrease as well.

It is a shame that the legacy of this session will be a budget that turns its back on Indiana's schoolchildren and property taxpayers. For anyone who cares about education and local taxpayers, it is simply indefensible.



## Fighting Crime

**Senate Bill 164** will require a person convicted of possession of child pornography with a prior conviction for the same offense to register as a sex offender.

**House Bill 1057** makes it a Class C infraction for a person in the passenger compartment of a motor vehicle to possess an alcoholic beverage container that has been opened, has a broken seal or from which some of the contents have been removed.

**House Bill 1099** will make the offense of voyeurism a Class D felony instead of a Class B misdemeanor if a person is convicted of the offense a subsequent time.

**Senate Bill 525** authorizes the state to seek a sentence of life imprisonment without parole for a person who commits a Class A felony constituting a sex offense against a child and who also has a prior unrelated Class A felony conviction for a sex offense against a child.





# Economic Development

I believe it is the duty of the General Assembly to provide the opportunities for Indiana to **create, maintain and increase good-paying jobs** in growth areas of our economy. This year's legislature made economic development a priority.

In fact, the very first bill passed into law this session created a new public-private group—the Indiana Economic Development Corporation—to serve as the leader for development efforts across our state. I was especially pleased we were able to make changes to this corporation that will ensure it is accountable to the public.

Other measures designed to help spur economic growth include **increasing the research and development tax credit**, phasing out the sales tax on research and development equipment, and extending the life and use of EDGE tax credits that help businesses retain and create jobs.

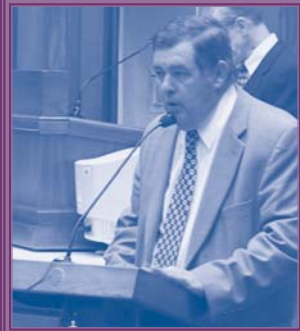
We also passed a measure that will speed the process of obtaining permits so developers can begin construction on new industrial sites. **Small business owners will receive additional tax breaks** under new legislation that will also reduce the potential that they will be harmed by government regulation.

All of these reforms can help economic growth in Indiana. I will continue to search for ways to grow our economy and increase good-paying jobs.

## 2005 Session Highlights



Listening from his desk, Rep. Pflum hears proposed legislation.



Rep. Pflum addresses the members of the House of Representatives.

## Photo IDs

Voters will be required to show photo identification before being allowed to cast a ballot. I believe this provision, which does not address the more serious concerns of election fraud that are taking place, will only prevent many seniors and minorities from taking part in elections.



## Reorganizing Government

Indiana now has a state Department of Agriculture and Office of Rural Affairs, as well as a Department of Homeland Security. House Democrats were able to prevent the governor from proceeding with a plan to reduce citizen participation in government by getting rid of hundreds of state boards and commissions.

## Protecting Victims

Victims will be automatically notified when offenders are released from prison or have their status changed. Offenders on home detention will be ordered to wear monitoring devices that constantly track their location.

## Tracking Sex Offenders

A person convicted of possessing child pornography who has a prior conviction for that offense will be required to register as a sex offender. The state will be allowed to seek life in prison without parole for a person who has multiple felony offenses involving sex crimes against a child.

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# New Laws Address Production of Meth

It has become a recurring theme each legislative session: the Indiana General Assembly passes new laws designed to stop the production and use of the drug meth. The 2005 session was no different, as we restricted the sale of cold and allergy medicines and other products that contain ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, two ingredients used to make meth.

When this law takes effect on July 1, most stores will be required to keep the drugs in a locked case or behind a counter. In addition, customers will be limited to three grams—about 100 tablets—of the medicines per week. To make a purchase, they will have to show a state or federal ID and sign a logbook.



This legislation is patterned after an Oklahoma law that has helped result in an 80-percent reduction in meth labs found in that state.

Why is meth so dangerous? Medical experts say the drug, which can be made inexpensively using chemicals that are easy to purchase, produces a high that lasts longer than cocaine and causes delusions and psychotic behavior. Since many of the ingredients are highly dangerous, producing meth raises the risk of explosions and contamination.

In recent years, legislators have passed a series of bills aimed at stopping meth. One of those creations was the statewide Methamphetamine Abuse Task Force, which came up with the concepts contained in this new law. Other measures help police and prosecutors track down people who purchase large amounts of the chemical re-agents used to make the drug and require people convicted of meth-related offenses to help pay for cleaning up sites where they produced the drug.

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